BOOKS Printed for *Fincham Gardiner.*

1. A Perſwaſive to Communion with the Church of *England.*
2. A Reſolution of ſome Caſes of Conſcience which reſpect Church-Communion.
3. The Caſe of Indifferent things uſed in the Worſhip of God, propoſed and Stated, by conſidering theſe Queſtions, *&c.*
4. A Diſcourſe about Edification.
5. The Reſolution of this Caſe of Conſcience, *Whether the Church of* Englands *Symbolizing ſo far as it doth with the Church of* Rome, *makes it unlawful to hold Communion with the Church of* England?
6. A Letter to *Anonymus*, in anſwer to his three Letters to Dr. *Sherlock* about Church-Communion.
7. Certain Caſes of Conſcience reſolved, concerning the Lawfulneſs of Joyning with Forms of Prayer in Publick Worſhip. In two Parts.
8. The Caſe of mixt Communion: Whether it be Lawful to Separate from a Church upon the account of promiſcuous Congregations and mixt Communions?
9. An Anſwer to Diſſenters Objections againſt the Common Prayers, and ſome other parts of Divine Service preſcribed in the Liturgy of the Church of *England.*
10. The Caſe of Kneeling at the Holy Sacrament ſtated and reſolved, *&c.* In two Parts.
11. A Diſcourſe of Profiting by Sermons, and of going to hear where Men think they can profit moſt.
12. A ſerious Exhortation, with ſome important Advices relating to the late Caſes about Conformity, recommended to the preſent Diſſenters from the Church of *England.*
13. An Argument to Union; taken from the true intereſt of thoſe Diſſenters in *England* who profeſs and call themſelves Proteſtants.
14. Some Conſiderations about the Caſe of Scandal, or giving Offence to the Weak Brethren.
15. The Caſe of Infant-Baptiſm, in Five Queſtions, *&c.*
16. The Charge of Scandal, and giving Offence by Conformity, Refelled, and Reflected back upon Separation, *&c.*

1. A Diſcourſe about the charge of Novelty upon the Reformed Church of *England*, made by the Papiſts asking of us the Queſtion, Where was our Religion before *Luther*?
2. A Diſcourſe about Tradition, ſhewing what is meant by it, and what Tradition is to be received, and what Tradition is to be rejected.
3. The Difference of the Caſe between the Separation of Proteſtants from the Church of *Rome*, and the Separation of Diſſenters from the Church of *England.*
4. The Proteſtant Reſolution of Faith, *&c.*

BOOKS Printed for *Fincham Gardiner.*

1. A Perſwaſive to Communion with the Church of *England.*
2. A Reſolution of ſome Caſes of Conſcience which reſpect Church-Communion.
3. The Caſe of Indifferent things uſed in the Worſhip of God, propoſed and Stated, by conſidering theſe Queſtions, *&c.*
4. A Diſcourſe about Edification.
5. The Reſolution of this Caſe of Conſcience, *Whether the Church of* Englands *Symbolizing ſo far as it doth with the Church of* Rome, *makes it unlawful to hold Communion with the Church of* England?
6. A Letter to *Anonymus*, in anſwer to his three Letters to Dr. *Sherlock* about Church-Communion.
7. Certain Caſes of Conſcience reſolved, concerning the Lawfulneſs of Joyning with Forms of Prayer in Publick Worſhip. In two Parts.
8. The Caſe of mixt Communion: Whether it be Lawful to Separate from a Church upon the account of promiſcuous Congregations and mixt Communions?
9. An Anſwer to Diſſenters Objections againſt the Common Prayers, and ſome other parts of Divine Service preſcribed in the Liturgy of the Church of *England.*
10. The Caſe of Kneeling at the Holy Sacrament ſtated and reſolved, *&c.* In two Parts.
11. A Diſcourſe of Profiting by Sermons, and of going to hear where Men think they can profit moſt.
12. A ſerious Exhortation, with ſome important Advices relating to the late Caſes about Conformity, recommended to the preſent Diſſenters from the Church of *England.*
13. An Argument to Union; taken from the true intereſt of thoſe Diſſenters in *England* who profeſs and call themſelves Proteſtants.
14. Some Conſiderations about the Caſe of Scandal, or giving Offence to the Weak Brethren.
15. The Caſe of Infant-Baptiſm, in Five Queſtions, *&c.*
16. The Charge of Scandal, and giving Offence by Conformity, Refelled, and Reflected back upon Separation, *&c.*

1. A Diſcourſe about the charge of Novelty upon the Reformed Church of *England*, made by the Papiſts asking of us the Queſtion, Where was our Religion before *Luther*?
2. A Diſcourſe about Tradition, ſhewing what is meant by it, and what Tradition is to be received, and what Tradition is to be rejected.
3. The Difference of the Caſe between the Separation of Proteſtants from the Church of *Rome*, and the Separation of Diſſenters from the Church of *England.*
4. The Proteſtant Reſolution of Faith, *&c.*

A PERSWASIVE TO COMMUNION With the Church of England.

Dr. Grove Bp. of Chichester

The Second Edition Corrected.

Dr. Grove Bp. of Chichester

Ephes. 4. 15. Ἀληθεύοντες ἐν Ἀγάπῃ.

LONDON,
Printed by *J. Redmayne*, for *Fincham Gardiner* at the *White Horse* in *Ludgate-street*. 1683.

Books Printed for *FINCHAM GARDINER.*

A Continuation and Vindication of the Defence of Dr. *Stillingfleet*'s Unreaſonableneſs of Separation, in Anſwer to Mr. *Baxter*, and Mr. *Lob*, *&c.*

Conſiderations of preſent uſe, conſidering the Danger Reſulting from the Change of our Church-Government.

1. A Perſwaſive to Communion with the Church of *England.*

2. A Reſolution of ſome Caſes of Conſcience, which Reſpect Church-Communion.

3. The Caſe of Indifferent things, uſed in the Worſhip of God, Propoſed and Stated by conſidering theſe Queſtions, *&c.*

4. A Diſcourſe about Edification.

5. The Reſolution of this Caſe of Conſcience, *Whether the Church of* England's *Symbolizing ſo far as it doth with the Church of* Rome, *makes it unlawful to hold Communion with the Church of* England?

6. A Letter to *Anonymus*, in Anſwer to his Three Letters to Dr. *Sherlock* about Church-Communion.

7. Certain Caſes of Conſcience reſolved, concerning the Lawfulneſs of joyning with Forms of Prayer in Publick Worſhip. In two Parts.

8. The Caſe of Mixt Communion. Whether it be Lawful to ſeparate from a Church upon the Account of promiſcuous Congregations, and Mixt Communions?

9. An Anſwer to the Diſſenters Objections againſt the Common Prayers, and ſome other Parts of Divine Service Preſcribed in the Liturgy of the Church of *England.*

10. The Caſe of Kneeling at the Holy Sacrament, Stated and Reſolved, *&c.* The firſt Part.

11. Certain Caſes of Conſcience, *&c.* The Second Part.

12. A Diſcourſe of Profiting by Sermons, and of going to hear where Men think they can profit moſt.

13. A Diſcourſe about the charge of Novelty upon the Reformed Church of *England*, made by the Papiſt asking of us the Queſtion, Where was our Religion before *Luther*?

A Perſwaſive to COMMUNION With the CHURCH *of ENGLAND.*

THere is nothing that does more ſcandalize and unſettle the Weak, nor tempt the Proud and Licentious to a profeſſed neglect of all Religion, than the many cauſleſs Diviſions which do ſometimes happen in the Church. And he is no lively Member of that Myſtical Body of Chriſt, that is not ſenſibly affected with the Fatal Conſequences of theſe things; and does not endeavor, what he Lawfully may, to do ſomething towards the healing of thoſe Wounds which have been made by the extreme Scrupuloſity of ſome; and are ſtill kept Bleeding by the Subtilty and cunning Artifice of others. For it is manifeſt enough, and cannot now be denied, that the *Papiſts* have always attempted to pull down the Church of *England* by pretended *Proteſtant* hands; and have made uſe of the facility of our Diſſenting Brethren to bring about their own Deſigns. I with the eminent Danger

we have been brought into, would prevail with them at last to forbear to Batter and Undermine us, as they have done; when they cannot but see that the Common Enemy is waiting all Opportunities, and stands ready to enter at those Breaches which they are making. They might condemn the rashness of their own Counsels, and lament it, it may be, when it would be too late, if they should see *Popery* erected upon the ruins of that Church which they themselves had overthrown. We know how restless and industrious the *Romish* Faction has always been; and the only visible Security we have against the prevailing of it, lies in the firm *Union* of the whole *Protestant* Profession; and there is nothing wherein there is the least probability that we can ever be all *United*, unless it be the Church of *England* as it stands by Law established, agreeable to the Rules of the Holy Gospel, consonant to the Doctrine and Practice of the Primitive Christians; and not only Allowed, but highly Honored by all the Reformed Churches in the World. Here is a Point fixed in which we all may Center; whereas they that differ from us are not yet, and, it may be, never will be perfectly agreed upon their own New Models of Discipline and Government; neither can they find one Precept or Example in Scripture or Antiquity, for the Constituting any Church without an *Episcopal* Power presiding over it. And if any Party amongst them could have that *Form* of *Church Government* confirmed by Law, which they esteem the most Apostolical; it is manifest from reason and experience, that it would be presently Opposed by all the rest, with no less Violence than ours is; and instead of putting an end to our Divisions, would most certainly increase them. Therefore though they have all still imposed their several *Forms*, with the greatest Rigor, wherever they have had the Power,

or

or but the Hopes of it in their hands; yet that all Sorts of Diſſenters may be drawn into the Confederacy for the preſent, we hear now of nothing ſo much as *the Miſchief of Impoſitions*, and the Natural Right, and great Advantages of *Toleration*. Which is the very thing which the *Romiſh* Emiſſaries have always aimed at; and ſeems to be one of the ſubtileſt parts of the *Popiſh Plot*: As might be made out by divers undeniable Arguments; and appears ſufficiently from many of the Letters, Tryals, and Narratives that have been lately publiſhed: And it can be no wonder that they ſhould give their Cordial Aſſiſtance to ſuch a Deſign, which if it ſhould ever paſs into an Act, would reward their Diligence with a cheap and eaſie Victory. For they may plainly foreſee, that it would be ſo far from *Uniting* us, that it would undoubtedly break us in pieces by a Law. Now if *Union* be always neceſſary, upon the common Obligations of Chriſtianity, it will be much more ſo in the preſent Conjuncture; conſidering the ſtrength and incouragements that may be given to the *Popiſh* Cauſe, by the continuance of our Diſſenſions: And if there be far greater hopes that we may at length, by the bleſſing of God, be ſooner *United* in the way of the Church of *England*, than in any other; then it muſt needs be the greateſt Service that can be done to the *Proteſtant* Intereſt, if we could all be perſwaded to joyn heartily in the Communion of that Church, that has hitherto been, and ſtill is ſo great a Defence againſt the Errors and Superſtitions of *Rome*.

It would be an unpardonable Vanity to imagine that theſe ſhort Papers ſhould be able to effect, what ſo many Learned and Solid Treatiſes have not yet done. But I addreſs this little Eſſay only to thoſe that have not time to peruſe a larger Volume. I have been incouraged to this Undertaking by the Numbers of thoſe here in *Lon-*

don, that have ſeemed formerly to diſſent from us, who have lately joyned with us, not only in Prayer, but in the Holy Communion of the Bleſſed Body and Blood of Chriſt. And I hope that many more may be invited, and diſpoſed by their good Example, to receive the ſame Satisfaction that they have found. Theſe that are already come in will not ſtand in need of any farther Perſwaſion, but only that they would continue Conſtant in that Communion they have now embraced. For if they ſhould leave us again, and return to their *Separate* Aſſemblies, they would ſeem by this to condemn themſelves. For if it were Lawful for them to Communicate with us once, it muſt be Lawful for them to do ſo ſtill; and they will not refuſe to ſubmit to Authority in all things that may Lawfully be done. I cannot therefore ſee how they can avoid being ſelf-condemned, if they ſhould forſake our Communion; for if they judge it Unlawful, they ſinned Wilfully when they entred into it; if they think it Lawful, they would then Sin in withdrawing from it; ſince it is injoyned by that Power which they confeſs they are bound to obey in Lawful things. If they ſhould ſay that they once thought it Unlawful, after that they judged it to be Lawful, and now conceive it Unlawful again: This ſtrange unſteadineſs in Opinion would look a great deal more like Humor than Judgment. And it might occaſion vehement Suſpicions in ſome, not otherwiſe very Cenſorious, that this Uncertainty proceeds not from Conſcience, but Deſign; and that all their Compliance was only to ſerve a preſent turn; to decline an Eccleſiaſtical Cenſure, to keep a beneficial Place, or to be qualified for an Office in ſome great Corporation. Thus men might be apt enough to ſuſpect; but I am willing to believe any thing rather, than that they that have always made ſhew of ſo great a Tenderneſs, ſhould be

guilty

guilty of ſo much Hypocriſie and Prophaneſs together, as to dare even to approach to the Lord's Table, (under great diſſatisfaction of mind, it may be) meerly to advance ſome Secular end. But I hope their Behaviour for the future, will ſufficiently clear them from ſuch an imputation.

I ſhall therefore apply my ſelf only to thoſe that do ſtill forbear our Communion; and offer ſomething very briefly, which I conceive may be uſeful for the ſatisfying their moſt known and ordinary Doubts; that as we do all profeſs the ſame Faith, we may all agree in the ſame way of Diſcipline, and Worſhip; and all become peaceable and orderly Members of the ſame Church. And for the obtaining this moſt Excellent end, Firſt, I ſhall deſire them impartially to conſider of ſome things that may incline them to be Peaceably minded, and tend to the removing of the general Prejudices they have unhappily conceived againſt the Church of *England*: Then I ſhall endeavor to give what ſatisfaction I can to the chief *Objections* againſt us, which they are wont to urge in Defence of the preſent *Separation*. And laſtly, I ſhall exhort them to a brotherly *Union*, upon ſuch Motives and Arguments as the Goſpel ſuggeſts, and make for the Credit and Safety of the *Proteſtant* Religion.

The things that I would commend to their ſerious Conſideration, which may ſerve to diſpoſe them to *Peace*, and to remove the *Prejudices* they have taken up, are ſuch as theſe. In the firſt place, they ſhould be very careful that it be not any *ſiniſter* end, or corrupt *Paſſion*, that did either engage them in the *Separation* at the beginning, or provokes them now to continue in it. I do not mention this becauſe I know any one of our Diſſenting Brethren to be guilty of it; but becauſe it muſt be confeſſed that mens minds are too often influenced

fluenced by their carnal *Interests* and *Affections*. These will be always mixing themselves in all their Consultations; these do commonly blind and pervert their Judgments, and lead them into ten thousand Errours. These are the occasion that Fancy sometimes passes for Conscience; that Melancholy Fumes are admired for Divine Inspirations; and that the overflowing of our Gall is looked upon as pure Zeal. These and the like are very dangerous and usual Mistakes, that do frequently proceed from the prevalency of our *Passions*. If therefore we do divide from a Church, it will most highly concern us to be very Cautious, that we be not acted by any such Principle. For if we hope to Gain, and grow Rich by our Departure; if we are Ashamed, or Scorn to retract the Opinions we have once Professed; if we imagine we have more *Light* than the first Reformers, when indeed we are very Ignorant; if we cannot endure to be Opposed in any thing; if we Murmur and Repine at our Governors, when they require our Obedience where we are unwilling to pay it; these are signs that our *Affections* are turbulent and unruly; and while we are thus disposed, we can never be assured but that Covetousness, Pride, and Impatience, might be the greatest Motives that induced us to make a *Separation*, and the strongest Arguments that we have to maintain it. But I cannot charge our Dissenting Brethren with these things; I believe that many of them may be Upright and Sincere in their Intentions. But because they are all in the same estate of Degeneracy and Corruption which others are, I would intreat them to be very careful that they be never led away by these, or the like temptations; but that they would always labor to preserve those holy Dispositions of Integrity, Meekness, Humility and Condescension, which are the best

beſt Preparatives to the *receiving of the Truth in the Love of it.*

After they have thus freed their minds from all irregular *Paſſions* and *Deſigns*, it would conduce exceedingly to the PEACE of the Church, if they would be ſure to expreſs their greateſt Care and Concern in the more *Weighty* and *Subſtantial* things of Religion. This would prevent many of the Quarrels that do often ariſe in matters but of ſmall Importance. If real Holineſs and Piety be the thing that we aim at, then when we may be ſecured of this, we ſhould not be ſo very forward to enter upon fierce and endleſs Diſputes about the external Modes and Circumſtances of Worſhip. If I may ſerve God there in Spirit and in Truth, why ſhould a Gown, or a Cloak, or a Surplice fright me from the Church, when either of theſe is injoyned by my Superiors? If I may be inſtructed in the way of Salvation and eternal Happineſs, why ſhould I forſake the Publick Aſſemblies, becauſe I am not allowed to joyn my ſelf to what Congregation I pleaſe; and had not an immediate hand in the choice of my Paſtor? When our hearts are bent upon the *great* things of Religion, we ſhall ſee but little Reaſon to be Contentious about matters of leſſer Conſequence; a few indifferent Rites will ſcarce be able to tempt us to break off Communion with that Church, with which we are at perfect Agreement in all Fundamental and Neceſſary points.

The next thing that may tend to the promoting our *Union* is the Conſideration of the heinous Nature and *Guilt* of *Schiſm*; which is nothing elſe but the *Separating* our ſelves from a True Church without any juſt Occaſion given. The want of due apprehenſions of the *Sinfulneſs* of this, ſeems to be the main Cauſe of our preſent Diviſions. Men are not generally ſufficiently ſenſible how much they do Oppoſe that Spirit of

Peace,

Peace, and brotherly Love, which ſhould diffuſe it ſelf through the whole Body of Chriſtian People, when they ſuppoſe every ſlender Pretence enough to juſtifie their departing from us, and ſetting up a Church againſt a Church. They think it a matter almoſt Indifferent, and that they are left to their own Choice to joyn with what Society of Chriſtians they pleaſe themſelves. Which giddy Principle, if it ſhould prevail, would certainly throw us into an abſolute Confuſion, and introduce all the Errors and Miſchiefs that can be imagined. But our bleſſed Lord founded but One Univerſal Church; and when he was ready to be Crucified for us, and

John 17. 20, 21. *Prayed not for the Apoſtles alone, but for them alſo that ſhould believe in him through their word*; one of the laſt Petitions which he then put up, amongſt divers others to the ſame purpoſe, was, *That they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee; that they alſo may be one in us, that the World may believe that thou haſt ſent me.* This it is plain was to be a viſible *Unity* that might be taken notice of in the World, and ſo become an inducement to move men to the embracing of the Chriſtian Faith. Therefore as we would avoid the hardening of men in Atheiſm and Infidelity, and making the Prayer of our dying Saviour, as much as in us lies, wholly ineffectual; we ſhould be exceeding Cautious that we do not wilfully *Divide* his holy Catholick Church. We are often warned of this; and how many Arguments does St. *Paul* heap together to

Eph. 4. 3, 4, 5, 6. perſwade us to keep the *Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace? One Body, and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your Calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptiſm, one God and Father of all.* And how pathetically does the ſame Apoſtle exhort us again to the ſame thing, by all the mutual endearments that Chriſtianity

Phil. 2. 1, 2. affords; *If there be therefore any Conſolation in Chriſt, if*

if any Comfort of Love, if any Fellowſhip of the Spirit, if any Bowels and Mercies; fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the ſame love, being of one accord, of one mind. Theſe vehement Exhortations to *Peace* and Concord, do ſtrictly oblige us to hold Communion with that Church which requires nothing that is Unlawful of us. The Church of *Rome* will not admit us, unleſs we profeſs a belief of Tranſubſtantiation, and Purgatory, and a certain kind of Infallibility, no body knows where; unleſs we will worſhip the Hoſt, and Saints, and Images, and do many other things directly repugnant to the Word of God: We cannot therefore Communicate with her, unleſs we ſhould partake of her groſs and ſuperſtitious Errours. But the Church of *England* does not exact any thing from us that God has forbidden; therefore we may Communicate with her without Sin; and if we may, it muſt be a Sin in us if we do not do it. Certain it is that every cauſleſs *Separation* is a very great one; ſo great, that ſome of the Antients have thought it is not to be expiated by the Blood of Martyrdom; and I know no Cauſe ſufficient to defend our leaving a Communion, but a neceſſity of being involved in *Sin*, if we ſhould remain in it. Now ſince it muſt be confeſſed that *Schiſm* is a very grievous *Sin*; we had need be well aſſured that we have juſt occaſion for it, before we withdraw from the Communion of a Church; and if we have raſhly withdrawn, we are bound to return without delay.

Then we may conſider farther that all Chriſtians are *obliged* to endeavor, as much as they can, to *avoid* all *differences* of *Opinion* that may occaſion Quarrels and Conteſts among them. This will appear from that paſſionate Intreaty and Admonition which the holy Apoſtle gave the *Corinthians*, when they were in danger of being rent into ſeveral Factions, upon miſunderſtand-

1 Cor. 1. 10. ings and emulations not much unlike unto ours. *Now I beſeech you, Brethren, by the Name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that ye all ſpeak the ſame thing, and that there be no Diviſions among you; but that ye be perfectly joyned together in the ſame mind, and in the ſame judgment.* Such an Univerſal agreement and harmony in the Church is very deſirable, and every one is bound to promote it. And the firſt ſtep that can be made towards this happy *Concord* in *Opinion* and *Affections*, is to diſpoſe our minds to a calm and *teachable* Temper; to be always ready to acknowledg the force of an Argument, though it contradict our former Perſwaſions never ſo much; to be grieved at the Animoſities, and uncharitable Contentions, which a diverſity of Judgment is wont to pro-
Rom. 14. 19. duce; *to follow after the things which make for Peace*; to be deſirous to ſee an end of theſe Unchriſtian Diviſions, and glad of every Opportunity that may bring us nearer to one another, and think we have gained a glorious Victory, when we have overcome any miſtake that kept us at a diſtance from our Brethren. This is a generous and truly Chriſtian diſpoſition, and that which has an immediate tendency towards the reconciling all manner of Differences. On the other ſide, there can be little hopes that men ſhould ever agree, when they ſeem reſolved to maintain the point in Controverſie, whatever it is; when they do not ſtudy to be Satisfied, but to cheriſh their Scruples; and hunt about for New ones, when their old Objections are fully anſwered. This is a moſt perverſe and untractable Humour, which takes away all poſſibility of a good Accord. For while either of the Diſſenting Parties is thus unwilling to be Convinced, and ſearches after Exceptions, there will never be wanting ſome Cavil or other that muſt be ſure to ſerve them to perpetuate the Diſpute. But 'tis a ſhrewd Sign we eſteem our Cauſe little better

better than Deſperate, when, after the Weapons we began the Fight with are wreſted from us, we ſnatch up any thing that comes next to hand to throw at our Adverſary. This Obſtinacy does not well become us: In all our Debates our aim ſhould be to find out the truth, and not to triumph over our Antagoniſt. All ſober Chriſtians, eſpecially where the *Peace* of the Church is concerned, ſhould always ſtrive to bring the Controverſie to a happy iſſue, and compoſure; and not ſeek for Pretences to widen the breach. And then we might all join in Praiſing and Glorifying of God; and be reſtored again to that bleſſed eſtate they were in, at the firſt Preaching of the Goſpel, when *the Multitude of them that believed were of one Heart, and of one Soul; and continued ſtedfaſtly in the Apoſtles Doctrine, and Fellowſhip, and in breaking of Bread, and in Prayers.* Acts 4. 32. Ch. 2. 42. Theſe few Conſiderations I have now mentioned might be ſomething uſeful to the procurement of ſuch a Holy and Heavenly *Peace* in all Chriſtian Societies throughout the World.

And if we were but careful never to be byaſſed by *Paſſion* or *Intereſt*; if our greateſt *Zeal* and Concern were placed upon the more *Weighty* and *Subſtantial* matters of Religion; if we ſhould ſeriouſly conſider how grievous a *Sin* it is to *Separate* from a Church without any juſt cauſe; and if we were diſpoſed to *Peace*, and *willing* to have our Doubts and Scruples ſatisfied; I think moſt of the *Prejudices* againſt the Church of *England* might be eaſily removed; and we might all joyn in the ſame Communion, to the Glory of God, and the Joy and Comfort of all good *Proteſtants*, and the Confuſion of thoſe that deſign to ſwallow us up, and have no other hopes of prevailing, but by the help of thoſe Differences, which for that end, they have a long time moſt ſtudiouſly fomented amongſt us. Let not our

unreaſonable Fears and groundleſs Jealouſies encourage their Attempts with too great a probability of Succeſs. It would be a ſad addition to our Miſeries, if the Guilt and Shame of them too might be laid to our Charge. With what remorſe ſhould we reflect upon it, (when the heat of our Paſſion was over) if the *Proteſtant* Profeſſion ſhould be farther endangered, and the Agents of *Rome* get greater Advantages dayly, by thoſe Diſtractions which have been ſecretly managed by them, but openly carried on and maintained by our ſelves! With what face ſhould we look to ſee our Enemies, not only triumphing over us, but mocking and deriding us, for being ſo far impoſed upon by their cunning, as to be made the immediate inſtruments of our own ruin! But God Almighty, in his wiſe and gracious Providence, ſo confound all their Devices that tend to the ſubverſion of the Truth; and ſo Unite and Compoſe our Differences, that hereafter we may have no juſt occaſion to fear either their Treachery, or their Force. This is a Petition, I am ſure, in which no good Chriſtian can refuſe to joyn; and if we do heartily deſire this, let us do what we can to promote it; if our Prayer be not unſincere and hypocritical, we ſhall make uſe of our beſt endeavours to obtain the thing we have prayed for. And now if our *Union* be thus deſirable and neceſſary, what ſhould hinder but that at laſt we might be all moſt happily united under the Diſcipline and Government of the Church of *England*? A Church that is already Framed and Conſtituted; that has the Countenance and Eſtabliſhment of the Laws; that has been Protected by a Succeſſion of Wiſe and Pious Princes; that was Defended unto Death by our late Martyred Sovereign; that was Reſtored by His Majeſty that now is, and has been ever ſince ſo graciouſly Cheriſhed by him, as if the Care of it were a Quality inherent and hereditary

hereditary to the Crown. A Church that was Reformed by full and ſufficient Authority; upon mature and ſerious Deliberation; with a perfect ſubmiſſion to the Rule of holy Scripture, and a due regard to the example of the moſt Primitive times. A Church that has conſtantly rejected all the Errours and Corruptions of *Rome*; that admits of neither their Infallibility, nor Supremacy; that allows no Purgatory, nor Indulgences, no adoration of Reliques, and Images, no Praying to Saints nor Angels; that does not think that God can be pleaſed with idle Pilgrimages, or a forced Celibacy, or any ſet number of *Ave*'s and *Paternoſter*'s, or other formal Devotions exactly computed upon a ſtring of Beads, and muttered over in an unknown Tongue; that does not rob the Laity of half the Communion, nor teach them that ſtrange and contradictious Doctrine that the Elements are tranſubſtantiated into the real Body and Blood of Chriſt in the Lord's Supper; that does not only conſtantly deny theſe, and many more abſurd and erroneous Opinions of the *Papiſts*, but has always ſent forth as ſtout and able Champions to oppoſe them, as any the Chriſtian World affords. A Church whoſe Doctrine is confeſſed to be Orthodox by the generality of our Diſſenting Brethren, and whoſe Diſcipline and Order of external Worſhip has nothing in it repugnant to any Law of God. And what imaginable ground can there then be to juſtifie a *Separation* from ſuch a Church? Certainly the uſe of a few Indifferent things, appointed only for Order's ſake, will not be enough to do it. Theſe are not Forbidden, and therefore cannot be Sinful in themſelves; and where God has not Forbidden, our Superiours may Command; and in all ſuch caſes we are bound to Obey.

Some indeed there are that will not be ſatisfied with this. They tell us, that it is not ſufficient that a thing

be

be not *Forbidden*, but that it must be *Commanded*, or else it cannot be used in the Worship of God without Sin. But if this Opinion be true, I must confess that then it is Unlawful to hold Communion not only with ours but with any Church that is, or ever was in the World; for I do not believe that One can be found amongst them All, that has not required the use of some Indifferent thing that was not *Commanded*. Our Dissenting Brethren themselves will allow that the Time and Place of Religious Assemblies may be prescribed by Authority. And if these necessary Circumstances may be thus Determined, though they be not *Commanded* by God; then it will be as Lawful to prescribe what particular Gestures and Habits shall be there used. For these are things of the same Nature; Circumstances as necessary as Time and Place; and if we have any respect to the Decent and Reverent performance of the Service of God, they may be as necessary to be determined too. However it must be acknowledged that some things that are not Commanded may be Lawfully Enjoyned and Submitted to; and if some, then all that are of the same Indifferent nature; unless there can be some sufficient reason assigned why some should be excepted, and some not; which will be very difficult where the Nature of the things is the same. And in our present case, it will be hard in the general to conceive how the Command of a Lawful Power should make that Unlawful which was not *Forbidden*, and by consequence was Lawful before.

But if it should be still insisted on, that nothing must be *Commanded* that God has not *Commanded*; they that are of this Perswasion, should be very certain that they have clear proof out of the Scriptures for it before they undertake to *Forbid* that which God has not *Forbidden*; or else they stand condemned by their own Principle.

Now

Now the Arguments they bring for this out of the New Teſtament are very few: And thoſe very obſcure, and no way applicable to the matter in hand, without being mightily ſtrained: Thoſe out of the Old Teſtament are not many; that which has been chiefly urged, and ſeems indeed the moſt pertinent and material, is this: The whole *Levitical* Service was particularly preſcribed by God himſelf, and *Moſes* was ſtrictly charged to make the Tabernacle and all the Utenſils that belonged unto it, *After the pattern that was ſhewed him in the Mount.* Exod. 25. 40. *And* Moſes *verily was faithful in all his Houſe as a Servant; and ſo is Chriſt as a Son over his own Houſe*; that is, the Church: Therefore as *Moſes* laid down all the particular Rules to be obſerved in the Worſhip of God, under the Legal Diſpenſation, ſo has Chriſt under the Evangelical; and it is as dangerous to add, as it is to detract from theſe written Rules; we may no more do what is not *Commanded*, then what is *Forbidden.* This I take to be the main Argument that is brought againſt us in the preſent Controverſie; and if this can be Anſwered, all the reſt will be but of little Force. Heb. 3. 5, 6.

Therefore to give what ſatisfaction I can to this, I ſay firſt, that throughout the whole Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, where *Moſes* and *Chriſt*, or the Law and the Goſpel are compared, the ſcope of the Apoſtle is to ſhew the exact Correſpondence there was betwixt the Type and the Antitype; and not that our Saviour had as particularly preſcribed the Order of external Worſhip, as *Moſes* by Gods appointment had done. For it is certain he did not; to give but one inſtance of very many: The manner of Celebrating the Paſſover, how it ſhould be Killed, and how it ſhould be Eaten, is it ſet down with every minute Circumſtance: But the Inſtitution of the Supper of our Lord is not ſo delivered unto us: We Exod. 12.

have

have only a ſhort Narrative, with a general Command
Luk. 22. 19. ſuperadded; *Do this in remembrance of me.* And when
1 Cor. 11. 23, 24, 25. St. *Paul* repeats it again, he does it without any mention of the Poſture of Receiving. The Goſpel which teaches us a more Spiritual way of Serving God, is not ſo particular in the Circumſtantials of Worſhip as the Law was; and we muſt not affirm that it is, becauſe we would have it ſo. We cannot prove that Chriſt has actually done this, becauſe we imagine that he ſhould have done it. It would be better argued if we ſhould ſay, The Goſpel has not expreſsly determined theſe things, as the Law did; therefore they are left to the
Heb. 13. 17. prudent determination of *thoſe that have the Rule over us*, to whom we are Commanded to be *Obedient, and ſubmit our ſelves*; that the Epiſcopal Power may be equivalent to the Sacerdotal; and the Service of God as regularly Adminiſtred in the Church, as it was in the Temple.

Beſides, it was not a Sin, even under the Law, to ordain and obſerve ſome things, relating to the Worſhip of God, that were not written. And theſe could not be eſteemed additions to the Word, if they were not impoſed as Divine Precepts, but as Prudent Conſtitutions, appointed only for the more Orderly management of the external Offices of Religion. But that any thing ſhould be Unlawful meerly becauſe it is not *Commanded*, is a Doctrine, I think, that was never heard of among Jews or Chriſtians, till very lately. God had *Commanded* the ſetting up of a Tabernacle, and moſt punctually deſcribed how it ſhould be made: We have been told that there was not to be one *Pin* about it, for which there was not ſome ſpecial Direction. And
See 2 Sam. 17. God never *ſpake a word concerning building of an Houſe*;
2 Chron. 17. yet this notwithſtanding, *David*, without any *Command*, had it in his thoughts to build one; and *Nathan*

in

in his private judgment approved of the design; and God himself, though he suspended the execution of it for some time, commended him for it, and rewarded his pious Intentions, with a promise of *building him* another kind of *House*, by confirming the settlement of the Crown in his Family. 2 Chron 6. 8. Which is proof enough that every thing then that was not *Commanded*, was not therefore Sinful. The antient Church of the Jews were so fully satisfied in this, that they made no Scruple of ordering divers things, for which they could not find a *Command*. The Feast of the Dedication is a known and pregnant instance; it was of modern and humane Institution, and yet our Saviour vouchsafed to be present at it. John 10. 22. Some things they a little altered, and added others, at the Passeover; as their eating of it not Standing, but Sitting, or Lying at the Table; and their Singing a Paschal Hymn after it; which with some other like Usages, were observed by our blessed Lord, and his Disciples; and it can be no less than Blasphemy then to conceive, that there could be any thing that was Sinful in them. The whole matter may be concluded thus: If it were not Sinful under the Law, where the external Form of Divine Worship was particularly specified, to admit of certain Usages that were not *Commanded*, then much less is it Sinful to do so now under the Gospel, where the external Form is not so specified; where we have little more than such general Rules as these, to be respectively applied by Superiors and Inferiors: *Let all things be done Decently, and in Order*: 1 Cor. 14. 40. *Obey them that have the Rule over you*: Heb. 13. 17. *Where no Law is, there is no transgression.* Rom. 4. 15.

I have been something the longer in considering this Argument, because the whole debate must issue here; which way soever this be decided, the Controversie is at an end. If our Church require any thing of us that

is Unlawful, we are bound to *Separate* from her; if she do not, we are strictly ingaged to Communicate with her. They therefore that Divide, should first shew that she injoyns something Unlawful. But that never was, and I verily believe never can be made appear. For we are told, in the Person of St. *Paul*, that *All things are Lawful*; which must of necessity be understood of things that are not *Forbidden*: And then since it cannot be charged upon our Church, that she Commands any thing that is *Forbidden*; it must be granted that she Commands nothing, but what the Apostle has declared to be *Lawful*. What Reason then can be pretended, why we should rend and tear her very Bowels? Why should we run so headily into opposite Parties and Factions? Why should we hazard the *Protestant* Cause upon a number of little disunited Independent Interests, that are as much at Difference one with another, as they all are with us? What should make us so timorous in this, when we are so daring in some other cases? Why should we be afraid to joyn in Communion with a Reformed Church, whose Doctrine is Orthodox, whose Rites are Innocent, whose Government is Apostolical? A man would wonder truly what could be pleaded in defence of a Separation, when none of these can be justly accused. And yet there are certain Objections brought against us, which those that withdraw would fain perswade us to think sufficient to justifie their Departure. To some of the chief of these I shall now endeavour to give what satisfaction I can.

1 Cor. 6. 12. 10. 23.

Our Dissenting Brethren therefore are wont to plead; That there is a *Liturgy*, or Set *Form* of Publick Worship prescribed; That there are certain *Ceremonies* injoyned; That the use of these Controverted things gives great *Scandal* to the weak; That they cannot Safely joyn in our *mixt Communion*; That they leave our Assem-

blies

blies for the ſake of *greater Edification*, which they can find elſewhere: And for theſe Reaſons they think they are neceſſitated to depart from ours, and ſet up Churches to themſelves, according to the beſt Models that every one is able to draw. This is certainly a very dangerous adventure; and can never be juſtified by ſuch Arguments, as are produced; which might be all eaſily anſwered upon the general Principle I have already mentioned; That none of the things againſt which the exceptions are made are Unlawful; and therefore they cannot make our Communion Unlawful; and if that be not Unlawful, it muſt be Unlawful to divide from it. This might be Reply enough to the moſt, if not all the Objections that are, or can be brought. But becauſe it may be thought more ſatisfactory by ſome, I ſhall give a particular, though very ſhort Anſwer to thoſe I have now propoſed.

The Firſt and Great thing that is objected againſt our Church, is preſcribing a *Liturgy*, or Set *Form* of Prayers to be conſtantly uſed in Publick Worſhip. This is that which has raiſed a great many Clamours; Peoples minds have been extreamly incenſed and exaſperated againſt it; it has been cryed out upon as *Idolatrous*, *Popiſh*, *Superſtitious*, and I know not how many hard Names it has been called. But I am glad to find the temper of our Diſſenting Brethren altered ſo much for the better: We do not now ſo often hear thoſe bitter exclamations of *Rome* and *Babylon*, *Baal* and *Dagon*: The *Common Prayer* is not eſteemed ſuch an abominable thing, as ſome ignorant and heady Zealots were wont to count it. Among thoſe that have but too openly favoured the *Separation* the more conſiderable part, both for Number and Sobriety, do not only allow that a *Form* is Lawful, but will freely acknowledge that ours is ſo; and therefore they will admit of Occaſional; and

if ſo, I cannot ſee what can withhold them from a full and conſtant Communion with us. Certainly that which is Lawful once or twice, muſt be Lawful always. However we may take ſome delight to ſee the old Heats in any meaſure abated, and that the leaſt advances are made towards Peace. God grant that this Conceſſion may prove a ſtep to a happy and perfect Reconcilement. And ſo I hope it may; for our Brethren cannot be any longer offended with thoſe Forms in which they do ſometimes join themſelves. Nay thoſe that have not yet proceeded ſo far, but are ſtill afraid of being Defiled in our way of Worſhip, cannot have any colour to Condemn it for being a *Form*. The Jews had *Forms* in their Publick Aſſemblies, which this notwithſtanding were duly frequented by our bleſſed Saviour: Matth. 6. 9, &c. He delivered a *Form* himſelf, in his Sermon on the Luke 11. 2. Mount, and taught the ſame again to his Diſciples afterwards, and Commanded them to uſe it: Some *Forms* were received very early among the Ancient Chriſtians; who have been followed in this by all the *Proteſtant* Churches; but the Lawfulneſs of them was never called in queſtion heretofore: For how could it, ſince they are no were Forbidden? Or if a Command be thought requiſite to make them Lawful, the other way is no more Commanded than this; and therefore upon that Principle they muſt be both equally Lawful, or Unlawful: So that if any Prayer be Lawful, a *Form* muſt be confeſſed to be ſo. The Arguments in this caſe are ſo Convincing, that there are few now but that will readily agree that a *Form* may be Lawful in it ſelf; but then they think it ought not to be Impoſed, becauſe of ſome Inconveniences which they conceive do attend it. And they are principally theſe Two; the One, that there may be ſome particular Emergencies which cannot be provided for by a Set *Form*. The other,

other, that it is an hinderance to the *Spirit* of Prayer. The firſt of theſe has very little difficulty in it. The ordinary wants and neceſſities of Chriſtians are always the ſame, and we may Petition to have them ſupplied in the ſame Words; and for other things, it may generally be foreſeen that they may happen ſometimes; and ſutable *Forms* may be compoſed to be uſed upon ſuch Occaſions: Where theſe cannot be fitly applied, peculiar Offices may be ſet forth; as has been uſual in ſuch caſes: Where the exigency is great, and will not admit of ſo much delay as is neceſſary for that, the Miniſter is at Liberty to uſe his own Conceptions. But this cannot be urged for the Excluſion of a *Liturgy*. It were very unreaſonable to deprive the Church of known and approved *Forms*, and leave her to the mercy of extemporary Effuſions only; for the ſake of a few Contingencies, which may happen but very rarely, if at all, in a whole Age.

The other thing that is alledged would be more conſiderable, if it were really true, That *Forms* did indeed *hinder* the *Spirit* of Prayer. But this they do not: For it is a groſs and carnal Miſtake to imagine that the *Spirit* of Prayer can conſiſt in a readineſs of Expreſſion, and a natural or acquired volubility of Tongue; Arts and Accompliſhments whereof many Wicked men have been great Maſters; and wherein as many Good ones may be very deficient. The *Spirit* of Prayer muſt be acknowledged to be nothing elſe but an inward good and pious Diſpoſition of the Soul, wrought in us by the Grace of God; an unfeigned Humility and Abhorrence of our ſelves, when we confeſs our Sins, and beg for Pardon; an affectionate Senſe of our Wants, when we ask for all things neceſſary, both for this and the other Life; an holy exultation of Mind, when we offer up our Praiſes and Thanks for the Bleſſings we have received;

received; a full Resignation of our Concerns to God's disposal, and a Dependance upon his Promises for the granting our Requests, when we have made our Addresses unto him. These are the great Indications of the true *Spirit* of Prayer; and these are so far from being *Hindered*, that they may be very much Helped, and Advantaged by a *Form*. A man questionless may be more seriously Affected, in all these respects, and say *Amen* more heartily to a *Form* of sound Words which he hath known, and considered before, than he can to some uncertain Expressions which he never heard, nor thought on; and possibly may not so well understand, nor be satisfied in, when he hears them. The perplexity and doubtfulness of Thoughts, which must often arise, when we would join in Prayers we are unacquainted with, is directly Opposite to that Faith and Assurance with which we should Pray; and can scarce be prevented but by a well digested and studied *Form*; that may be Weighed, and soberly Assented to, by those that are required to join in it.

But some think that it may be manifest from *Experience*, that *Forms* are a *hinderance* to the very inward *Spirit* of Devotion. They have found their Affections very cold and flat, at our usual stated *Forms* of Prayer; but when they hear a man Pray without a *Form*, they are mightily ravished, and almost transported; and this difference of Temper they observe in themselves has prevailed with many, of the more undiscerning sort especially, to forsake our Communion. But it is always very dangerous to judge of things not by our Understandings, but by the various impulses and motions of our Affections. When we have Scripture and Reason on our side, we cannot be Deceived; but when we Determine, as we are swayed by the present byas of our Passions; these may be Charmed, or Raised, or Flattened,

Flattened, by ſeveral ſorts of *Spirits*; and quickly betray us into ſtrong Deluſions. Therefore if any one ſhould be tempted, as ſome have been, to leave the Church on this Account, that he thinks he may be more *affected* in another Place; before he goes, I would deſire him to conſider what it is that does thus *Affect* him: If it be the Matter and Subſtance of the Prayer, I ſuppoſe that may be uſually the ſame, at leaſt as good in our ordinary Offices, as it is in their unpremeditated Petitions; and ſo it will not be neceſſary to make a *Separation* for this: If it be only the chiming and harmony of the Words he is taken with, this is no more but a kind of ſenſitive Delight; and to apply the Prophet's Expreſſions here, it is but like *a very lovely Song of one that hath a pleaſant Voice, and can play well on an Inſtrument*: Ezek. 33. 32. This will by no means excuſe our departing from the Publick Aſſemblies; this would be in effect to ſay, that we may make Diviſions in the Church of God, to gratifie our own private, and it may be miſtaken Fancies. But if any one hath left us for a time upon this Pretence, and made ſome Trial of both ways, then I would deſire him ſtrictly to examine his own Conſcience, whether he have not often been as Dull and Indifferent at a Conceived Prayer, as ever he was at the Service of the Church: And then on the other ſide, let him conſider, whether he do not believe that very many may be as ſerious and devout at the Common Prayer, as ever he was at any in the other way he is pleaſed to prefer: And after he has thus inquired, if he ſee Reaſon to acknowledge both, as doubtleſs he will, then the Scales will be even at the leaſt: *Experience* will ſhew, that men may be Fervent and Affectionate with a *Form*, and Cold and Inattentive without one. And therefore when we are heavy, liſtleſs, and unaffected at a Prayer by a *Form*; this Defect cannot

not proceed from the Manner of the Devotion, but from the Indiſpoſition of the Perſon that uſes it. And when we *Separate* upon this occaſion, we are guilty of a double Iniquity, in Dividing the Church without ſufficient Cauſe; and charging our own Formality upon a good and wholeſome Conſtitution.

My intended brevity will not permit me to give a particular Anſwer to all the Exceptions that have been taken at our *Liturgy*; only in the general I ſay, I know nothing in it that can be pretended to be Sinful in it ſelf. The moſt that is urged are ſome ſuppoſed Inconveniences; which if we ſhould grant to be real, they cannot make our Communion Unlawful; and then, as I have often intimated, it muſt be a Sin to *Separate* from it; and we may not commit a Sin to decline an Inconvenience: This would be to *do evil that good may come* of it. They that are willing to improve every ſlight Exception into a Cauſe of *Separation*, ſhould beware of this. The queſtion is not, whether there be not any thing in the Order of our Divine Service which a man could wiſh to be altered? For that can never be expected under any Conſtitution. The main inquiry is this, whether any thing Unlawful be appointed to be uſed, which will make an Alteration not only deſirable, but neceſſary? And whether we are bound to withdraw till ſuch Alteration be made? Which has never been proved: Men generally forbear our Publick Worſhip, without ever examining into it, upon no other ground but becauſe they prefer their own Arbitrary way before it. Which I do not admire; but this is very ſtrange and unreaſonable, that they ſhould take ſuch a diſguſt at our *Liturgy*, and fly away from it, as if it were *Popiſh* and *Antichriſtian*, when they never have ſo much as read it; at leaſt conſidered it, as they ought. And here I ſhall take the Confidence

to

to affirm that the *Liturgy* ſome abhor ſo much, was made and reviewed with that Prudence and Moderation, that Care and Circumſpection, that there is not any thing now extant in that kind, that has been compos'd with greater Wiſdom, and Piety. If we ſhould take the liberty to compare it with the performances in the other way; (not to mention the many undecent, incoherent, irreverent expreſſions, to ſay no worſe, that might be collected) let any Prayer made occaſionally and *extempore* by the ableſt and moſt cautious of thoſe that magnifie that way, and deſpiſe ours, be taken exactly in writing, and publiſhed to the World; and I am very confident, that one man, without any great pains, may find more things really exceptionable, in that ſingle Prayer, in a ſhort time, than the ſeveral Parties of Diſſenters, with all the diligence they have hitherto uſed, have been able to diſcover in the whole Service of our Church in more than a hundred years. And yet ſome of our Brethren, that ſeek induſtriouſly for Scruples in the Common Prayer, will readily join in other ſudden conceived Prayers, without any Scruple; when they cannot tell but that there may be ſome dangerous Hereſie in every Sentence, and ſome great Indecencies and Abſurdities in every Word. This is ſuch partiality, and unequal dealing, as cannot be eaſily excus'd.

But if they ſhould allow of the *Forms* of Prayer in our *Liturgy*, there are certain *Ceremonies* injoyn'd, which they think give them occaſion enough to depart from our Communion. A man that were unacquainted with the true State of our caſe, that ſhould ſtand by and only hear the bitter Cries and Invectives that have been made againſt *Ceremonies*, would be ready to imagine that the Church was nothing elſe almoſt but *Ceremonies*. But he would be mightily ſurprized, when upon inquiry he ſhould find, that theſe *Ceremonies* which

had occaſioned all this noiſe, ſhould be no more than Three; the *Surpliee*, the *Croſs* after Baptiſm, and *Kneeling* at the Sacrament. He would be amazed to think that theſe ſhould be the things, about which ſo many maſſy Books had been written! So great diſcords and animoſities rais'd! Such a flouriſhing Church once quite deſtroyed, and now moſt miſerably divided, after it had been ſo happily reſtored! And his wonder muſt be increaſed, when he ſhould perceive that of theſe Three, there was but One, and no more, in which the People were any way concerned. The *Croſs* and the *Surplice*, are to be uſed only by the Miniſter; and if his Conſcience be ſatisfied, no mans elſe need to be diſturb'd about them. To *Kneel* at the Lord's Supper all indeed are commanded; but ſuppoſing this to be Unlawful, it could hinder us only from partaking in that Ordinance, and not in the reſt. But of that further by and by.

In the mean time, I do not underſtand but that ſome *Ceremonies*, and particular Determinations of Circumſtances are abſolutely neceſſary in the Worſhip of God; ſince it cannot be performed without them; they that will have no *Ceremonies*, can have no external Worſhip. This I think will not be denied. But the *Ceremonies* that are appointed in our Church are thought by ſome to be *ſignificant*, *ſuperſtitious*, and breaches of our Chriſtian *Liberty*; and therefore not to be indured. Theſe are the great Objections againſt the few *Ceremonies*, that are in uſe among us; and theſe I ſhall briefly Conſider.

Firſt we are told our *Ceremonies* are *ſignificant*: And why may not a *ſignificant Ceremony* be Lawful? Are not Kneeling, and lifting up the Eyes and Hands to Heaven *ſignifications* of the Reverence we owe to the Divine Majeſty? Yes: But *Ceremonies* that *ſignify* ſomething naturally, may be permitted; but not thoſe

that

that *signify* by inſtitution. There ſhould be ſome ſolid reaſon, or ſome plain Scripture Authority brought, to make this difference good: And here it is pleaded that every *ſignificant Ceremony* is a *Sacrament*; and it is downright *Popery* to make more *Sacraments*, than God has made. This I confeſs were very material, if it could be proved. But we acknowledge nothing to be a *Sacrament*, but what is *An outward and viſible ſign of an inward and ſpiritual grace, given unto us, ordained by Chriſt himſelf, as a means whereby we receive the ſame, and a pledge to aſſure us thereof.* Now if this be a true Definition, as it is owned by us, and muſt be acknowledged by our Diſſenting Brethren that talk ſo much of their approving the Doctrine of our Church; then our *Ceremonies* though they ſhould be never ſo *ſignificant*, cannot be *Sacraments*, becauſe they want ſo many Neceſſary and Eſſential conditions that are required to make a *Sacrament*. They are not of Divine *Ordination* and Appointment, they are of no efficacy to confer any *Grace*, neither are they any *Pledges*, and *Aſſurances* of it. But ſuppoſe we ſhould grant every *ſignificant Ceremony* to be a *Sacrament*; for it is neither pleaſant nor profitable to quarrel about Words: There is but one of the Three *Ceremonies*, and that is the *Croſs* at Baptiſm, that can be pretended to be *ſignificant*; and that indeed is made, *In token that* the party newly Baptized *ſhall not hereafter be aſhamed to confeſs the Faith of Chriſt Crucified*, &c. But this *ſign* of the *Croſs* was very anciently, if not always, uſed at Baptiſm, and upon ſeveral other occaſions, by the Primitive Chriſtians, in defiance of all ſorts of Infidels, and as we do it, *in Token* that they were *not aſhamed* of a *Crucified* Saviour. Our Church in this does but follow the example of the Pureſt and Holieſt Profeſſors of the Goſpel that ever were; and that but at a diſtance too, in doing that but once, which they

Common Prayer in the Catech.

Ibid. in Publick Baptiſm.

repeated often. And this can ſcarce be called a *ſignifi-cant Ceremony*. It is not appointed to Repreſent any thing unto us, but only to remind us of a Duty we are bound to do. Like the *Altar* that was built by the Children of *Reuben*, and *Gad*, and the half Tribe
Joſh. 22. 26. of *Manaſſeh*, *Not for burnt-offering, nor for ſacrifice; but that it might be a Witneſs.* And if any one ſhould think the *Surplice* were ordered to be worn to denote the innocency of Life, that does more eſpecially become thoſe that are particularly devoted to the Service of God; it is more than our Church has declared; but yet no man were to be blamed, that ſhould take occaſion from hence, to let his thoughts expatiate into a pious and ſeaſonable Meditation, and conſider how incongruous it would be, to have his inward parts full of filthineſs and corruption, when his outſide was covered with a clean white Linnen Garment. The Sum is, every *ſignificant Ceremony* is not a *Sacrament*; and none of ours can be properly ſaid to be *ſignificant*, repreſenting, *ſymbolical*; but only *Commemorating*, or if any man pleaſe to call them ſo, *Profeſſing ſigns*.

But though they cannot be proved to be *Sacraments*, yet they may be *Superſtitious*, and that is Objection enough againſt them. And I confeſs that they may be *Superſtitious*; but not in themſelves, for ſo they are perfectly Indifferent; but according to the Opinion or Conceit of thoſe that uſe them, or uſe them not. There may be *Superſtition* in the Obſerving of theſe, and there may be as much in the forbearing. *Superſtition* is nothing but a groundleſs Fancy attended ſometimes with an anxious Fear, and ſometimes with a fond Hope, that God is pleaſed or diſpleaſed with the bare performance or forbearance of what he hath neither Commanded nor Forbidden. He therefore that thinks he offends God in doing of that he has not Forbidden; and he that

imagines

imagines he ſhall pleaſe him, by the obſerving of what he has not Commanded, are both in ſome degree, and it may be, equally *Superſtitious*. And then the *Superſtition* that is exerciſed about the Obſervation of theſe *Ceremonies* muſt lie on the part of our Diſſenting Brethren, who think they ſhould Sin in keeping them, though they generally confeſs they are not Forbidden; and not on ours, who declare them to be Indifferent, and no otherwiſe acceptable unto God, but as they are the effects of Obedience to our Superiours, and neceſſary to the preſervation of Diſcipline and Order in the Church.

But it is farther urged by ſome, that theſe *Ceremonies* are a *Breach* of our Chriſtian *Liberty*. I need not enter upon a Diſcourſe of this; but as far as it concerns the matter in hand, I ſay; That the being freed from the *Ceremonial* Law is a part, though not the greateſt part of Chriſtian *Liberty*; but then it is not ſo much our being freed from obſerving it, as from the Neceſſity of obſerving it. The Apoſtles and firſt Chriſtians did voluntarily obſerve it for ſome time upon Prudential Conſiderations; and impoſed ſome things, as the *abſtaining from blood, and from things ſtrangled*; and yet they were *Free*, becauſe whatever they did of this Nature, they did it not with an Opinion of any Neceſſary obligation that lay upon them to do it, but upon other Motives; moſt commonly out of condeſcenſion to the weakneſs of the Jewiſh Converts. And if ſome *Judaical* Rites might not only be obſerved, but impoſed then; there can be no reaſon why a few Indifferent *Ceremonies* may not be appointed now, without any intrenchment upon the *Liberty* which Chriſt has purchaſed for us. Such things cannot be an infringment of that, but only when they are ſuppoſed to be either Unlawful or Neceſſary by Divine Command. Acts 15. 29.

Kneeling

Kneeling at the *Sacrament*, which is the *Ceremony* that is wont to be the moſt ſcrupled, is as little liable to the Objections, that I have now anſwered, as either of the other. It would be very uncharitable, and unjuſt to ſay as ſome have done, that it is an Act of Worſhip to the outward Elements; when the Church has declared this to be *Idolatry, to be abhorred of all Faithful Chriſtians.* If it ſhould be ſaid that we ought to receive in the ſame poſture, that they received at the firſt Inſtitution: We cannot certainly tell what that was: If it were that which is moſt probably Conjectured, it is never uſed: It is wholly laid aſide by thoſe that argue the moſt Zealouſly for it. But ſure if the particular Geſture had been ſo abſolutely neceſſary, as ſome do imagine, there would have been ſome plain, and expreſs mention of it ſomewhere in the Scripture; which there is not, as I have noted before. And then it muſt be very unwarrantable in thoſe, that *Separate* from our Church, becauſe they will not receive in that reverent manner which She has preſcribed. If there had been nothing injoyned in this matter, a man upon a ſerious apprehenſion of the infinite mercies of God, through the merits and mediation of his bleſſed Saviour, could ſcarce have forborn falling upon his Knees, when he came to partake of the Sacrament of his moſt precious Body and Blood. The commemoration of the Death and Paſſion of the Son of God, by which he was Redeemed would ſtrike him almoſt naturally, into the humbleſt poſture of Adoration. But if any reverence be granted to be due at ſuch a time, I am ſure *ſitting* at the Table, is a very unfit poſture to expreſs it. Or if any man ſhould like it better than that which is required with us; yet to make this an occaſion of departing from our Communion, would argue but too little value for the peace of the Church.

Rubr. after the Communion.

But

But ſome there are who though they be convinced of the Lawfulneſs of all theſe Rites and Uſages, and for their own particular, could joyn with us well enough; yet they dare not do it, for fear of giving *Scandal* and Offence to thoſe that are not ſatisfied in theſe things. This matter of *Scandal* has been ſo vehemently pleaded ſometimes as if it were the only thing to be regarded in all Church Conſtitutions; and that they were to be immediately diſuſed, whatever Authority injoyned them, aſſoon as any ſhould be offended at them. This puts all external Order in Chriſtian Aſſemblies into a very tottering condition, ready to be preſently overturned, by every little Scruple, that may chance to ariſe. But for anſwer to this we muſt obſerve: That they are the Weak, and Ignorant that take Offence: That their doubts and ſcruples are not to be nouriſhed and commended, but only born with for a time; That they are bound to take all due Care, and convenient Opportunity of Inſtruction, that they may be fully ſatisfied; and that it is in things meerly Indifferent, ſuch as *Meats* and *Drinks* where we are obliged to any compliance, for the avoiding of *Scandal*. Theſe things thus briefly premiſed, let it be conſidered; whether they who eſteem themſelves rather more Knowing than others, who ſeem unwilling to part with their Doubts, and who have entertained ſome Prejudices againſt thoſe that would inform them better, are to be treated like weak Brethren? And whether we ought to yield to them, where Authority has determined the contrary; unleſs we could prove our Obedience as Indifferent as the things ſcrupled at are ſuppoſed to be? If it ſhould be ſaid that we ought; yet at leaſt it cannot be ſafely done, till it be made appear, that all the weak are of one ſide. For in our preſent Caſe, if there ſhould be as many, as doubtleſs there are, that would be offended to ſee the manner of our Publick

See Rom. 14. 1 Cor. 8.

lick Worſhip altered, as there are to ſee it impoſed; then though the command of our Superiors ſhould ſignify nothing, we ſhould yet be upon equal terms, on the account of *Scandal* only; and as much bound not to *Separate*, as they think they are to *Separate*, by their own Principle. But in a word, no *Scandal* taken at an Indifferent thing, can be ſo great as the Sin, and Scandal both, of Confuſion and Diſorder, and Contempt of Authority.

There is another Exception near akin to this: Some have thought they muſt withdraw from us, becauſe of our *mixt Communions*, and that ſome which they judg unworthy Receivers, are admitted to the Lord's Table. This Objection proves nothing but a Supercilious Arrogance, and a great want of Charity in thoſe that make it. What care they may take in their new way of Diſcipline, I cannot tell; but our Church has given the Miniſter a Power of rejecting thoſe that are guilty of any known and ſcandalous Sin. And this is as much as can be done; the open Sinner may be excluded, but the cloſe Hypocrite will eſcape the narroweſt ſearch, that humane Induſtry can make. But if any *notorious evil Livers* ſhould be admitted through the ignorance, inadvertency, or negligence of the Miniſter; their Unworthineſs cannot defile thoſe that Communicate with them. It is generally thought that the Curſed Traytor *Judas* did partake of the Holy Supper, when it was firſt inſtituted by our Lord. God be praiſed, I have not heard, that amongſt us, the abuſes of this Ordinance, did ever ariſe to that Degree that they were at among the *Corinthians*; when at the very time of receiving, *one was Hungry, and another Drunken*: and yet the Apoſtle does not Command them to forſake the *Communion* of that Church, where theſe Scandalous Enormities were committed. Every man is charged

See Rubr. before the Communion.

1 Cor. 11. 21.

to

to *Examine himself*, and not another, before he presume *to eat of that Bread and drink of that Cup.* And it would be very well, if all men would hearken to this holy and pious Admonition; for he that inquires seriously into his own Sins, will find great cause to be Humble and Penitent, and so may become a worthy Communicant: But he that is curious to pry into the miscarriages of other men, will be apt to be vain, proud, self-conceited, and censorious; which will make him as unfit for the Table of the Lord, as any of those Faults which he so scornfully condemns in his Neighbour, that he esteems himself, and the ordinances of God polluted by his Company. Ver. 28.

But if none of these Pleas, I have mentioned, should be sufficient; many think they may leave our Assemblies only for the sake of *greater Edification*, which they can find elsewhere. This I believe prevails with great numbers, of the more ignorant especially, to depart from us. And I would to God they might obtain what they say they depart for; and that they were indeed more *Edified*, and did grow in Grace, under what Ministery soever it be. But alas! This talk of *greater Edification* is many times meer wantonness, and instability of humour; and too often rather in Fancy than effect. Men conceit that they are better *Edified*, not when they are more fully instructed in any weighty point of Faith; or more perfectly informed in some necessary Duty; or more efficaciously moved to the practice of what they Know; but when they are more gratified, and pleased, at the hearing of a Sermon, or the like. This is nothing but one sort of those *itching Ears* the Apostle speaks of. And they that are troubled with this disease, instead of being *Edified*, as they pretend, are commonly the most ignorant of all; and as blamable as any in their ordinary Conversation. 2 Tim. 4. 3.

I wish we had not too many examples of the truth of this. For besides that, it is great odds but that they make an unwise choice in the Teacher they set up to themselves at last; they likewise provoke God to leave them to the vanity of their own Minds, when they depend rather on the supposed abilities of a man, than the blessed influences of the holy Spirit; and look more at *Paul that plants*, and *Apollos that waters*, then at *God that gives the increase*.

If we have all things necessary to the building us up in our most holy Faith, in the Communion of the Church; it will be but a poor excuse for our Dividing from it, that we hoped to be better *Edified*; when we had no incouragement at all to hope it, as long as we continued in the state of *Separation*, upon this pretence. For it is the blessing of God alone, and not any mans skill in dispensing them, that can make the Word and Ordinances any way beneficial unto us. With the help of his Grace, those means of instruction which we sometimes undervalue the most, may be profitable to our Salvation; Without it our Ears may be tickled, and our Fancies pleasantly entertained for the time; but we cannot be truly *Edified* by the most fluent and popular Tongue, nor the most melting and pathetical Expressions in the World.

I have briefly examined the chief Objections that are brought against the established Order, and Constitution of our Church; and do not find that any, or all of them together, are of force enough to move an unprejudiced Person to forsake her Communion. It may not be done upon the account of *Liturgy*, *Ceremonies*, *Scandal*, *mixt Communion*, or out of hopes of *greater Edification*. I might have easily inlarged upon all these particulars; but the compass of my present Design, would not allow it. And I have some hopes that these

and

and other points in difference, may be handled by others to better advantage, and to the satisfaction of those that are not yet convinced, and to the happy settlement of a lasting *Peace* and *Union*, among all the Members of this divided Church. God grant that all our indeavours may tend this way; and that the Divine Goodness may make them Successful. If these Papers should chance to fall into the hands of any one of those that have *Separated* from us, I would intreat him not to be Offended at them; but to look upon the Author, as a well-meaning Man, that was willing to throw a little Water upon the common flame, that is like to consume us. They were not written, I am sure with any bitterness of Mind, or Expression; but out of meer pitty to see a poor, lamentable, distressed Church, languishing away, and ready to perish by desperate Wounds and Convulsions within her own Bowels. Such sad and Melancholy thoughts as these apprehensions must needs occasion, could scarce be vented in angry and provoking Language. But some are so tender of the Opinions they have taken up, that whether true or false, they cannot endure to have them touched: They are impatient of the calmest Opposition; and when you offer any thing to perswade them, though it should be to brotherly Love and Peace among Christians, they suspect you for an Enemy, and think that you come to set traps in their way to insnare their Consciences. But I hope this short Discourse will not be incountered by any such Prejudice; but that it may be perused, with the same Impartiality that it was written.

On this presumption, I shall be bold to exhort all those that now Dissent, to a Brotherly *Union*; upon such motives and arguments, as the Gospel suggests, and make for the Credit and Safety of the *Protestant*

Religion. It will be readily acknowledged by every ſober and intelligent man, that Peace and Amity, and a good Correſpondence betwixt the ſeveral Members of which they conſiſt, is the only Beauty, Strength, and Security of all Societies; and on the contrary, that the nouriſhing of Animoſities, and running into oppoſite Parties and Factions, does mightily weaken, and by degrees almoſt unavoidably draw on the Ruin and Diſſolution of any Community, whether Civil or Sacred. Concord and Union therefore will be as neceſſary for the Preſervation of the Church, as of the State. It has been known by too ſad an Experience, as well in ours as other Ages, what a pernicious Influence the inteſtine Broils and Quarrels among Chriſtians have had. They have been the great ſtumbling Block to Jews, Turks, and Heathens; and the main hinderance of their Converſion; they have made ſome among our ſelves to become Doubtful and Sceptical in their Religion; they have led others into many dangerous Errours, that ſhake the very Foundations of our Faith; and ſome they have tempted to caſt off the Natural ſenſe they had of the Deity, and imboldened to an open and profeſſed Atheiſm.

These are ſome of the moſt uſual Fruits, which the unhappy Differences in the Church are wont to produce; over and above the particular Unkindneſſes and Uncharitable Feuds, which they commonly beget among Chriſtians of the ſame Perſwaſion, as to all ſubſtantial and weighty matters of Belief. And it were a thing very deſirable in all reſpects, that theſe at leaſt ſhould be all firmly United in the ſame holy Communion. They that have the ſame Articles of Faith, and hope to meet in the ſame Heaven, through the Merits of the ſame Lord, ſhould not be afraid to come into the ſame Aſſemblies, and join ſeriouſly in ſending up the

ſame

ſame Prayers, and participating of the ſame Sacraments. Beſides the many ſtrict Precepts and other ſtrong Obligations which we have unto this; our Saviour *Died* Joh. 11. 52. *that he might gather together in One, the Children of God that were ſcattered abroad.* And ſhould we not then contradict this end of his Death, if we ſhould ſet thoſe at Strife and Variance which he intended to *Unite?* Nay, might we not be ſaid, in ſome ſort, to *Crucifie the Son of God afreſh*; if we ſhould Mangle and Divide any ſound and healthful part of that Body of which he owns himſelf to be the Head? If indeed our Church did require us to make profeſſion of any falſe and erroneous Opinions; if in the external Order and Worſhip we were injoined to do any thing contrary to any Divine Command; we are bound in ſuch Inſtances to withdraw from her: But if her Doctrine be highly approved by moſt of our Diſſenting Brethren; and her Diſcipline and Service ſuch, as is not any way inconſiſtent with any Law of God; then we are indiſpenſably ingaged to join in Communion with her. For, as has been intimated ſeveral times, and it cannot be inculcated too often, Nothing but the Unlawfulneſs of Communicating can make a *Separation* Lawful.

But if it be reſolved that the Church of *England* muſt be forſaken, notwithſtanding that neither her Doctrine nor Diſcipline can be juſtly condemned; it would yet convenient to bethink our ſelves, what might be the moſt adviſable to be done after we had left it. Whether we ſhould ſet up another way of Adminiſtration in the room of it: Or whether every one ſhould have the Liberty of following that which he fancied the beſt. If we are for the ſetting up another way; it muſt be either *Preſbytery*, or *Independency*: For if there ſhould be any other new Forms of Government, they are not yet of Reputation enough to be put

in

in Competition with these two great Pretenders to Divine Right. And *Presbytery*, which had once the fairest hopes of establishing it self, is now grown weak and inconsiderable in comparison of what it was; and those few which would still be thought of that Perswasion, are manifestly departed from their own Principles, and are fain to support themselves by Gathered Assemblies, which they were not wont to allow. *Independency* therefore seems at this time to be the prevailing way; but their manner of Gathering Members, and Associating themselves into particular Congregations, their *holy Band*, *special Agreement*, or *Covenant*, which they make essential to the Constituting of a Church, are things which have not the least foundation in the holy Scriptures; neither were they ever Countenanced by the practice of any Orthodox Christians in former Ages. But put the case we should admit of either of these Forms of Discipline and Government, we should be as far, if not farther from being *United* than we are now. For they have both been known to have been very rigorous Imposers, wherever they have had the Power of Commanding; and as they have sometimes been, so they would soon again become more odious to the several Subdivisions of Dissenters than *Episcopacy* it self. And this being a thing so easily foreseen, we are not now urged with the necessity of setting up either of these. The great expedient that has been proposed of late, is to indulge a Liberty of chooſing what Church, and what way of Worship any man pleases; that is, to grant a publick *Toleration* of divers Religions. But this, though it might gratifie the present humor of some part of the Nation, and serve some mens Occasions better than any Establishment, would be quickly disliked by most of those that now contend so Zealously for it. For there must needs be a constant Emulation and Struggling

ling betwixt the ſeveral *Tolerated* Parties, which would give a continual Diſturbance; and as ſoon as any of them began to grow Numerous and Powerful, and had any Hopes of ſucceeding, they would preſently imagine it very neceſſary to impoſe their own Diſcipline upon all the reſt; and this probably might ſoon put an end to the ſo much deſired and magnified way of *Toleration*. Or if we could ſuppoſe them contented to allow the ſame Freedom to others which they injoyed themſelves, yet it could not poſſibly be avoided, but that this Indulgence muſt ſtrangely multiply our Diviſions; while ſome Members of their *Separate* Churches would take Offence, and withdraw, and make choice of a new Paſtor, and incorporate themſelves into another new Church, and that after a while, upon the like Pretences, might be ſplit into another, and another, and ſo on without any ſtop. And then this would certainly ſet open the Gate to a Flood of Hereſies, and ſuch monſtrous and extravagant Opinions, as muſt be confeſſed, by the moſt prejudiced Diſſenter, to be of far more dangerous conſequence to the cauſe of Religion than that ſober and pious *Liturgy*, and thoſe few indifferent *Rites* which are now injoined. This the experience of the Late Times found to be true. The Church of *England* was no ſooner overthrown, but ſome of thoſe that had been the moſt forward and buſie to pull her down, when they ſaw how ſuddenly the ſwarms of other Sectaries increaſed upon them, were forced to acknowledge that the Conſtitution which they had deſtroyed, was a great check and reſtraint to thoſe Errors, which grew Bold and Licencious under the Liberty they had procured. The Biſhops then, who juſt before had been the common Theme of Popular Obloquy, had ſome good Words unwillingly dropt upon them, and their Diligence and Succeſs in ſuppreſſing Abſurd, Heretical,

retical, and many times Blaſphemous Doctrines, was allowed ſome juſt Commendation. That Government which they had traduced and rendered as odious as was poſſible, by all the arts of Defamation that could be uſed, was found upon Trial to be far more deſirable, by ſome of its greateſt Enemies, than that Anarchy and Confuſion they had contended for with ſo much Violence.

But if we cannot be made ſufficiently Apprehenſive of the diſmal Effects, that will almoſt Naturally follow upon a Publick *Toleration*; yet methinks we ſhould now be a little Suſpitious of it, ſince we know it is the main Engine the *Papiſts* have been working with theſe many years. If there be no Remedy but that our Church muſt fall, let us not throw it down our ſelves, by methods of their Preſcribing; let us not act as if we were proſecuting the Deſigns of the Conclave; and proceed juſt as if we were governed by the Decrees of the pretended Infallible Chair. We may be aſhamed to look ſo like Tools in the hands of the *Jeſuits*; when we ſuffer our ſelves to be guided by thoſe meaſures which they had taken, and talk and do as they would have us; as if we were immediately inſpired from *Rome*. For we cannot be ignorant that *Toleration* has been a Device of theirs; and it would not be any part of our Wiſdom to grow unreaſonably fond of the Invention of our Enemies; and think to ſtrengthen the *Proteſtant* Intereſt by thoſe very means which their Subtilty and Malice had contrived to deſtroy it.

But if this Conſideration ſhould be laid aſide; What need can there be otherwiſe, that we ſhould deſire to be Indulged in our departure from a Church, where we may Communicate with a ſafe Conſcience? As we may certainly do in ours; whoſe greateſt Adverſaries have not been able, after the moſt curious Search they could make,

make, to find out one thing in the whole Conſtitution which they could poſitively affirm to be Forbidden; and till that can be made appear, we muſt ſtill ſay that it cannot be Unlawful. If the *Impoſition* of ſome Indifferent things be thought a ſufficient ground for a *Separation*; (as it is now generally urged, ſince the proof of their Unlawfulneſs is deſpaired of) then we muſt have *Separated* from the Apoſtolical Churches, who had ſome ſuch Uſages, as the Holy Kiſs, and others, whoſe Indifferency is acknowledged by their being wholly diſuſed: We muſt have *Separated* from the firſt Churches that ſucceeded them, which had all ſome Indifferent things injoined: We muſt *Separate* at this time from all the Reformed Churches in the World; for there is none of theſe which does not require the uſe of ſuch things, as we ſhould judge cauſe enough to depart from them: Nay, when we have once *Separated* from the Church of *England* upon this account, we muſt then *Separate* from one another, and every man muſt be a Church by himſelf; for it is impoſſible that any Society, whether meerly Humane, or Chriſtian, ſhould ſubſiſt, without the orderly determination of ſome Indifferent things. And ſure we can never hope to maintain our *Separation* upon ſuch a Principle, as would not only part us from all the Churches that are, or ever were, and tear Chriſtendom into ten thouſand pieces; but ſcarce leaves us ſo much as the Notion of a Church, and makes Chriſtian Communion abſolutely impracticable. Let us not give thoſe of *Rome* the pleaſure of ſeeing that Church which has always oppoſed them with the greateſt Vigor, and been the conſtant mark of their Envy, quite Ruined, or extreamly Weakned, by a pernicious Miſtake, that would Divide and Divide us again, and again, and never make any end of Dividing. Let us ſhew at leaſt that well are we incli-

ned unto Peace, by coming as far as we can; and if there ſhould be any thing that we may poſſibly ſuſpect to be Unlawful, let not this hinder us from joining in thoſe other holy Offices, in which we have not any pretence of a Doubt. Let not our groundleſs Scrupling at a Ceremony, or two, fright us from the whole Worſhip of God, againſt which we have not any Exceptions.

And for thoſe that eſteem our Communion in all particulars utterly Unlawful, which I ſuppoſe are but very few, and I know they have but very ſlight Arguments for the ſevere Judgment they paſs upon us; if they will meet, let them do it in the moſt private manner that they can, without any vain Oſtentation of their Numbers, which cannot be any Satisfaction to their Conſciences, but may make their Adherents over forward and bold, and tend to the creating of Jealouſies in the Government. And while they are upon theſe terms, they cannot reaſonably expect any Connivance. They might ſooner hope for it from his Majeſties wonted and often experienced Clemency; when they ſhall make it appear that their Diſſent is modeſt and humble, and ſuch as has no other but a Religious Deſign in it: Than when they aſſume a high degree of Confidence, and think to extort Indulgencies by Clamors and Diſcontents, and reſolve to Aſſemble openly in Oppoſition to a Royal Command; as if it were a piece of Chriſtian Fortitude to outbrave Authority. Theſe are but ill Methods of courting the Favour of a Prince. But I hope for the future we ſhall all, upon all Occaſions, behave our ſelves as becomes good Subjects, and ſober Chriſtians, and make no Diſturbances neither on a Civil nor Eccleſiaſtical account.

Let it Pity us at laſt to ſee the Ghaſtly Wounds that are ſtill renewed by the continuance of our Diviſions.

ſions. Let us have ſome Compaſſion on a Bleeding Church that is ready to Faint, and in eminent Danger of being made a prey to her Enemies, by the unnatural Heats and Animoſities of thoſe that ſhould Support and Defend her. Why ſhould we leave her thus Deſolate and Forlorn, when her preſent Exigencies require our moſt Cordial Aſſiſtance? If the condition of her Communion were ſuch as God's Laws did not allow, we might forſake her that had forſaken him. But ſince this cannot be Objected againſt her; ſince ſhe exacts no Forbidden thing of us, Let us ſtrengthen her Hands by our unanimous Agreement; and ſince we do not Condemn her Doctrine, let us not Deſpiſe her Worſhip; ſince the Subſtantials of Religion are the ſame, let not the Circumſtances of external Order and Diſcipline be any longer an Occaſion of Difference amongſt us. And ſo ſhall we bring Glory to God, a happy Peace to a Divided Church, a conſiderable Security to the *Proteſtant* Religion, and probably Defeat the ſubtle Practices of *Rome*, which now ſtands gaping after All; and hopes by our Diſtractions to repair the loſſes ſhe has ſuffered by the Reformation. May the Wiſdom of Heaven make all Wicked Purpoſes unſucceſsful; and the bleſſed Spirit of Love heal all our Breaches, and proſper the Charitable Endeavours of thoſe that follow after PEACE. *Amen.*

FINIS.